

should believe a multiplicity of gods, according to that idea of God before declared, that is, a multiplicity of supreme, omnipotent, or infinitely powerful beings; it is certain, that the Pagan Polytheism, and multiplicity of gods, must be understood according to some other notion of the word gods, or some equivocation in the use of it. It hath been already observed, that there were some time amongst the Pagans such, who, meaning nothing else by gods but understanding beings superior to men, did suppose a multitude of such deities, which yet they conceived to be all (as well as men) native and mortal, generated successively out of matter, and corrupted again into it, as Democritus's idols were. But these Theo-gonists, who thus generated all things whatsoever, and therefore the gods themselves universally, out of night and chaos, the ocean or fluid matter (notwithstanding their using the name gods) are plainly condemned both by Aristotle and Plato for downright Atheists, they making senseless matter the only self-existent thing, and the original of all things.

Wherefore there may be another notion of the word gods, as taken for understanding beings superior to men, that are not only immortal, but also self-existent and unmade. And, indeed, the assertors of a multiplicity of such gods as these, though they, cannot be accounted Theists in a strict and proper sense (according to that idea of God before declared), yet they are not vulgarly reputed Atheists neither, but looked upon as a kind of middle thing betwixt both, and commonly called Polytheists. The reason whereof seems to be this, because it is generally apprehended to be